

# ***Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee 2018 ANNUAL REPORT***



*Timber harvest of Jack Pine/Black Spruce off East Buckatabon Road in Conover*

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## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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Reporting Period: 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2018

As of 30 June 2018 the Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Department supervised and managed the following County owned lands:

41,078.62 acres – County Forest (County Forest Law)  
62.79 acres – County Forest Special Use (County Forest Law)  
41,141.41 acres – Total Acres Entered Into County Forest Law

### TIMBER SALES

#### 2018 Sales Sold Value

<u>Species</u>	<u>Tons Sold</u>
Aspen	5,275
White Pine	8,495
Red Pine	9,840
Jack Pine	2,100
Mixed Hardwoods	3,730
Spruce	660
Oak	4,075
White Birch	85
Red Maple	30
Tamarack	40
Balsam Fir	<u>1,100</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35,430</b>

<u>Species</u>	<u>MBF Sold</u>
Red Oak	692
Hard Maple	105
Mixed Hardwoods	<u>12</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>809</b>

In 2018 there were 18 tracts of timber sold, affecting approximately 879 acres. The total estimated value of all sales sold is \$909,469.10.

## County Forest 2018 Timber Harvest Schedule and Reconnaissance

Timber Type	Total Acres Scheduled for Harvest Treatment	Total Acres Set-up for Harvest Treatment	Total Acres Deferred or Rescheduled (Explanation)	Total Acres of Reconnaissance
Aspen	298-acres	223-acres	75-acres	2018-acres
White Pine	98-acres	98-acres	0-acres	361-acres
Red Pine	267-acres	267-acres	0-acres	568-acres
Jack Pine	151-acres	69-acres	82-acres	1025-acres
Balsam Fir	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres
Misc. Conifer	21-acres	21-acres	0-acres	0-acres
Black Spruce	18-acres	18-acres	0-acres	174-acres
White Spruce	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres
Tamarack	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres	25-acres
Oak	203-acres	172-acres	31-acres	336-acres
Northern Hardwoods	147-acres	111-acres	36-acres	624-acres
ROW	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres
Red Maple	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres
Cedar	25-acres	0-acres	25-acres	74-acres
Keg	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres	0-acres
Totals	1228-acres	979-acres	249-acres	5205-acres

## 2018 Sales Closed

<u>Species</u>	<u>Tons Closed</u>
Aspen	2,188
White Pine	2,859
Red Pine	7,260
Spruce	3,352
Jack Pine	766
Mixed Hardwoods	548
Tamarack	2,144
Balsam Fir	187
Oak	<u>1,455</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>21,032</b>

<u>Species</u>	<u>MBF Closed</u>
White Birch	1
Red Oak	<u>39</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>40</b>

The total value of timber sale contracts closed in 2018 is \$450,124.47. There were 14 timber sales contracts closed affecting approximately 594 acres. As of 31 December 2018, there were 20 open timber sale contracts on Vilas County lands.

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

Vilas County Forest was included in the 2004 group audit pool for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) and has been found to be in conformance with the standard of the program and has been a participant since January 2005. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is the group certificate holder for the Certification Program for which Wisconsin Counties participate. The Certification Program is funded and administered by the WDNR. The purpose of the program is to verify through a third party that forest management practices are sustainable, which directly corresponds to sales of forest products and jobs in Wisconsin. On 28 February 2017, the Vilas County Board of Supervisors formally accepted and committed to dual certification and participation in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) and the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) forest certification systems for the management of the Vilas County Forest. The verification is accomplished by an audits of management practices and comparison to the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) and the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®). The WDNR contracted with SCS Global Services (SCS) to conduct the annual SFI® and FSC® certification audits of Wisconsin's County Forests.

Vilas County Forest has an annual reconnaissance goal of 2,000 acres. Vilas County Forest prioritizes the reconnaissance goal by targeting the oldest data. To remain in compliance with the SFI® and FSC® certification standards, reconnaissance data must not be more than 20 years old. It is also important to maintain current and relevant information on each stand to assist in the planning process. In 2018 with the aid of the Summer Forestry LTE position filled by Travis Jochimsen, completion of field reconnaissance and stand inventory took place on 4,637 acres of forestlands. In addition, editing of 3,003 acres of forest stand data or stand boundary updates occurred in the Wisconsin Forest Inventory & Reporting System (WisFIRS). Regeneration monitoring occurred on 1,797 acres forest stands. These stands of both natural regeneration and plantations were surveyed and monitored for survival and competition.



## Tree planting 2018

In 2018, Superior Forestry Co. of Tilly, AR planted seedlings on three sites totaling 37 acres with 36,000 Red Pine and 2,000 Jack Pine. The total cost of planting including tree seedlings and labor for hand planting was \$8,178.10 or \$221.02/acre. It is very important to note Vilas County receives a 50% discount from the retail price of bare root seedlings from the Wisconsin DNR nursery program.

As a service to private landowners, the Department stores seedling orders purchased from the Wisconsin DNR nurseries each spring, providing refrigerated storage until seedlings are picked up. A minimum fee of \$5.00 per 1,000 tree seedlings is charged.

## Site preparation activities in 2018

Site preparation activities in 2018 included both chemical and mechanical treatments. Anchor chain scarification using the Forestry Department's anchor chain was completed in November 2018 on 46 acres of Oak & Pine regeneration. The total cost of the anchor chain scarification was \$176.71 /acre which includes the County's skidder (DOT Rate), operator wages/benefits, anchor chain, and transportation.

Chemical site prep was conducted in August 2018 on 2 sites totaling 38 acres. The contract was awarded to Future Forests, Inc. at a cost of \$3,762.00.



*Chemical site preparation on a White Pine site for natural regeneration*



## Mechanical Release activities in 2018

The Vilas County Forestry Department bid out and awarded one mechanical release contract in 2018. The project was located in the township of Conover and encompassed a total of 76 acres in five locations. The goal of the project was to reduce competition in jack pine/white pine plantations, promote oak regeneration, and create nesting habitat for Kirkland Warblers. The contract was awarded to Flambeau Stump Jumpers, LLC of Phillips, WI. Competing vegetation consisted mainly of cherry species, red maple, scrub oak, and jack pine. Releasing young jack pine, white pine, and oak allowed greater allocation of resources to each seedling/sapling and reduced the likelihood of suppression by competing and economically unviable vegetation. The results will be maximum growth and associated return on investment, less mortality from suppressed trees, and better response to future improvement thinnings.



Mechanical release of red pine plantation.

Crewmembers from Flambeau Stump Jumpers, LLC used brush saws to complete three (3) sites and 40 acres of release work. Site 1 (1-18) included 1 acre of work that created 10 openings for Kirtland Warblers to nest in. Site 2 (2-18) was 8 acres of jack pine release from red maple and aspen competition. The treatment maintained the jack pine plantation along Highway K. Site 3 (3-18) released red oak regeneration from red

maple competition. The general management objective within the oak types is to maintain oak to produce the maximum quantity and quality of sawtimber and veneer within ecological and economic limitations and maintain its wildlife and mast producing benefits. The total project cost was \$6,075.00 or \$151.87/acre. A 1-year contract extension was granted to Flambeau Stump Jumpers, LLC to complete 36 acres of the project in 2019.

### Annual County Forest–WDNR Planning Meeting

The Annual County Forest–WDNR Planning Meeting was held on September 11, 2018. The following is a summary of special concern items resulting from that meeting. Wisconsin-DNR – County Forest Liaison Jill Nemec reported that DNR Forestry staff were able to meet and exceed the standard for fiscal year 2017-2018, with a total of 933.75 hours (67.75 additional hours or 107.8%). Time Standards were recalculated for WDNR Fiscal Years 2019-2022, resulting in Vilas County Forest receiving an increase in WDNR assistance in work hours from 866 to 910 hours per year for fiscal 2019. The time standard for Vilas County Forest for the remainder of FY19-22 will be recalculated in 2019 and may change slightly.

Last fiscal year, the majority of DNR work was spent on timber sale establishment and recon, with some incidental administration activities like monthly committee meetings. The group discussed the increase in water levels on the county forest – there have been more frequent rain events with more precipitation than in past years and water tables are rising. Ryan Brown has been doing some road rehab on forest roads after the summer's rain events.

### 15-Year Plan Amendments

Vilas County did not make any changes to the 15-Year Plan in 2018, however several ordinances governing use of the County Forest were amended. The Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee recommended amending Chapter 16, Forestry and Land Ordinance, sections 16.02(16)(a), 16.02(16)(b), and 16.02(16)(c) DEFINITIONS and section 16.08(8) PEDDLING AND SOLICITING, to allow guide signs, informational signs, and 'You are Here' signs on recreational trails. The Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee also recommended amending Chapter 16, Forestry and Land Ordinance, section 16.06(8) SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL USE OF FOREST LANDS (c) Hunting to expand the period for placement of blinds and tree stands on the County Forest from September 1<sup>st</sup> to January 15<sup>th</sup> following.

### FOREST BOUNDARIES

There are approximately 253.25 miles of County Forest boundaries with other landowners, of which approximately 235 miles either have now been established by certified survey, or have a line by agreement. In 2018, one (1) mile of certified surveys were completed on the County Forest, at a cost of \$4,800.00.

The program to establish the boundary of the County Forest began in the early 1980's. The boundary lines, corners, and witnesses represent a major investment by the County and are vital to the management of the County Forest. The maintenance of these boundary references is accomplished by refreshing blazes on trees and painting. This work must be accomplished on a rotation of 8-10 years to easily retrace the boundary evidence. In 2018, 37 miles of boundary with associated appurtenances received maintenance.



## LAND ACTIVITIES

County Board Resolution No. 98-49 provided for a maximum beginning-of-the-year balance of \$200,000.00 in the Segregated Land Account. The Segregated Land Account was established for the purpose of acquisition of lands to “block in” or consolidate the County Forest ownership, thus avoiding access, harvesting, and other land management issues. County Board Resolution No. 2015-45 was adopted by the County Board on 28 July 2015, and provides that the expenditure of funds from the Segregated Land Account may also be used for recreational facilities development on the Vilas County Forest, and also raised the cap on this Land Account to \$300,000.00. The FRL Committee within their approved budget must authorize such expenditures. County Board Resolution No. 2016-51 provided that 10% of Timber Sales Revenue be placed into the Segregated Land Account to provide a revenue stream for recreational facilities development.

Tax deeds were taken in 2018 on nine (9) parcels, two of which were subsequently redeemed by the former owners. All advertising and administrative costs for real estate transactions are paid from the revenue generated through those transactions.



*Tax Parcel 2-849*



**Revenues:**

Account #250.50.41105 In Rem Cost Recovery Forestry	\$ 1,515.41
Account #250.50.41196 In Rem Cost Recovery Treasurer	21,049.00
Account #250.50.46810 – 10% Timber Sales Revenue	59,382.80
Account #250.50.48211 – Rent of Tower Space	3,416.91
Account #250.50.48322 – Real Estate Sales Revenue	84,200.42
Account #250.50.49210 – Transfer In	98,000.00
(General Fund for St. Germain Gravel Pit Purchase)	
<b>Total Revenue/Increase in Fund Balance:</b>	<b>\$268,151.70</b>

**Expense:**

Account #250.50.51560 - Land Trade & Sale Expense	60,425.80
<i>(Environmental Reviews, Appraisals, Title Work, Surveys, Presque Isle Clean-up, etc.)</i>	
Account #250.50.51565 – Tax Deed Expense	14,170.42
Account #250.59100 Transfers Out (Torch Lake Campground)	100,000.00
<b>Total Expense/Decrease in Fund Balance:</b>	<b>\$174,596.22</b>

**COUNTY FOREST WITHDRAWALS & ENTRIES**

The Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, and Land Committee continues to address the Landfill Venture Group's letter dated 16 March 2016 requesting the withdrawal of 71 acres of County Forest Lands. The Committee continues to express their support for the expansion project. On June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 the Vilas County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 2018-37 to proceed with the acquisition of 116.94 acres of land owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in the Town of St. Germain, Vilas County, Wisconsin for \$180,000.00. Sixty-four (64) acres of this land purchase combined with the purchase of 17.4 acres from the Wisconsin DNR adjacent to Hunter Lake Park will replace 71 acres of County Forest Lands to be withdrawn for the landfill expansion project. In September 2017 the Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee purchased the 17.4 acres directly adjacent to Vilas County's Hunter Lake Park, which allows for a much-needed expansion of the recreation and parking area, including an additional 740 feet of frontage on Hunter Lake.

**COUNTY FOREST ROADS**

County Forest Roads are the primary source of access to the Vilas County Forest for management and recreation activities. Due to their importance to the State's economy for the movement of raw materials for the forest products industry & public recreation, qualifying County Forest Roads receive a maintenance distribution from the Department of Transportation. There are 48.43 miles of County Forest Roads in the Vilas County Forest. The maintenance distribution from the WDOT was \$15,113.14 in 2018, or \$312.06/mile. The 2018 Forestry Department Budget included \$32,000.00 for gravel crushing in the Snipe Pit, road maintenance, grading, side brushing, and graveling projects.

In May 2018 the Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, and Land Committee agreed to provide 375 yards of gravel at a cost of \$2,437.50 to upgrade 300 feet of the County's portion of Torch Lake Road. In exchange the Town of Conover agreed to take over that portion of Torch Lake Road and pave it with asphalt to the entrance of the Torch Lake Campground and RV Park.

Through an agreement with the County Highway Department, the 48.43-mile road system was graded in both the spring and fall at a cost of \$10,338.88.

Gravel is applied each year to portions of roads that do not hold up under heavy recreational use by the public and/or by hauling wood products. In August 2018, Cloverland Trucking, LLC applied approximately 150 cubic yards of road gravel to a depth of 4 inches 16 feet wide on one (1) application site a distance of the of 1,000 feet in length on of Pioneer Creek Trail. Cloverland Trucking, LLC prepared the road surface prior to

the application of gravel by grading the road and filling with recovered gravel from site, creating a crown of 3 inches and also created or opened drainage ditches approximately every 70 feet on the downward slope of the hills.

In August 2018, the Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Department is solicited bids for the crushing and stockpiling of 6,000 tons of 1-¼ inch crushed road gravel at our Snipe Lake Road Fire Lane Gravel Pit. The Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee awarded the contract PGA Inc of Weston, Wisconsin for at a cost of \$38,500.00. The crushing was completed in November 2018, with plans to use the gravel on the west 1.68 miles of Snipe Lake Fire Lane in 2019.



*Gravel Crushing at the Snipe Lake Fire Lane Gravel Pit*

## **CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

Funding for game and non-game habitat improvement and access comes primarily from both the County Conservation budget and grant sources. The primary grant funding sources are the County Conservation Aid funding (50% cost share) and County Forest Wildlife Habitat Grant program in which the County Forests receive monies at the rate of 5 cents/acre for lands entered in the County Forest Law §28.11, Wis. Stats. Both are administered by the Wisconsin DNR. In 2018, Vilas County received \$7,500 for the County Forest Wildlife Habitat Grant and \$1,928.31 for the County Conservation Aids Grant programs. The cost share grant is applied to the maintenance of Wildlife Openings and the Hunter/Hiking Trail System.

Additional funding sources are through grants from the Ruffed Grouse Society, Wild Turkey Federation and Turkey Stamp Funds.

Managing the Hunter/Hiking Trail System on a 3-year maintenance cycle, more efficiently maintains its usefulness for public access & wildlife benefits. Over one hundred miles of hunter-hiking trails have been developed and closed to motor vehicle access for hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and other dispersed non-motorized recreational activities. These roads were initially created as a result of logging roads built by private contractors harvesting timber on the County Forest, beginning in the early 1970's. Over the years these trails were widened and connected using monies from the County Fish and Game Aids, the Habitat Development Fund Grants and Pittman-Robertson Funds, along with County appropriations. Vilas County Forestry Department has been partnering with the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) on the development and maintenance of The Hunter/Hiking Trail System and wildlife openings since the mid 1980's. This walking system is gated at key access points to aid in its maintenance. Berms have been used at other points where access is not critical and to eliminate costs associated with gates & their maintenance. The mapping of the System is incorporated as a map layer in the Department's Geographic Information System (GIS). The trail systems are also posted with map boards at access points. Illegal ATV use necessitates the periodic maintenance of the berms. The Wisconsin DNR Eagle River Ranger Station provides the fire equipment dozer as an economical means of maintaining the berms.

The Hunter/Hiking Trail System received mowing on 37.61 miles of the 104.4-mile system in 2018. The Units maintained were the Ski Hill Unit, Snipe/Ewald Lake Unit, Mud Minnow Lake Unit, Deep Lake Unit, and the Disabled Hunter Access Area, both the driving and non-driving areas. Nineteen (19) wildlife openings received maintenance in 2018.

The wildlife openings are used by a variety of wildlife, ranging from deer to turkeys to ruffed grouse to butterflies. Gated trails lead to the openings, so they are accessible to dispersed recreational opportunities such as hunting and hiking.

County Forest Wildlife Habitat Grant program, Vilas County contracted with Flambeau Stump Jumpers to create gaps in young PJ stands for Kirtland Warbler habitat using some nickel an acre monies to fund a project. County and DNR staff working with research biologists identified potential nesting locations for the warbler off the NEPCO Landing area. Flambeau Stump Jumpers is also working on release of young oak stands to enhance wild turkey habitat. These projects were started in the fall 2018 and will be completed in 2019.

### **FORESTRY PROGRAM - REVENUES AND EXPENSES**

#### **Forestry Fund Revenues:**

Timber Sales (County Forest Law-46810) Gross:	\$593,827.98	
Less 10% Severance Tax Payment to Towns:	(59,382.80)	
(10% CFL Sales-24460)		
Less 10% Revenues to Segregated Land Fund:	<u>(59,382.80)</u>	
<b>Net Timber Sale Revenues:</b>		475,062.38
(Budgeted Revenues - \$375,000)		
Dispersed Camping Permits (46821.001)	42.65	
Christmas Trees & Boughs (46821.002)	412.32	
Tree Delivery (46821.003)	14.17	
Access Permits (46821.004)	500.00	
Leases (46821.005)	1,100.00	
County Forest Maps (46821.007)	<u>25.59</u>	
<b>Sub-Total Miscellaneous (46821)</b>		2,094.73
<b>Sale of Fixed Assets:</b>		<u>43.47</u>
<b>Total Forestry Fund Net Revenues:</b>		<b>\$477,200.58</b>



**Forestry Fund Expenses - Annual Budget: (56103)** \$282,301.00

.110 County Forest Administrator (75%)	\$ 48,102.15
.112 Assistant Forest Administrator (96%)	49,269.79
.136 Forest Technician (60%)	28,975.24
.122 Administrative Secretary (40%)	13,529.73
.131 Extra Help	6,748.00
.164 Allocated Wages	(44,149.00)
.750 WRS, FICA, INS, WC, IC, Overtime	73,577.36
.221 Telephone	719.34
.222 Electric & Water Forestry, Rec, Land HQ	5,118.51
.223 Natural Gas Forestry, Rec, Land HQ	623.60
.239 Refuse Removal	299.61
.253 Mats & Mop Forestry, Rec, Land HQ	923.01
.296 Timber Stand Improvement	32,769.20
.297 Surveys & Lines	4,800.00
.302 Equipment Purchase & Maintenance	9,211.26
.310 Supplies	2,885.80
.311 Postage	318.12
.320 Dues & Meetings	4,349.07
.323 Publishing Fees	623.37
.330 Meetings/Continuing Education	1,499.67
.389 Maintenance & Repair FRL HQ	2,999.36
.799 County Forest Roads	31,999.65
.810 Capital Equipment	<u>-0-</u>

**Total Forestry Fund Expenses:** **\$275,161.85**

**Conservation Fund & State Aid Forest Rds. Revenues:**

County Conservation Aid (43584)	\$ 7,500.00
County Forest Road Aid	<u>15,113.14</u>

**Total Revenues:** **\$22,613.14**

**Conservation Fund (56104)& State Aid Forest Rds. (56106) Expenses - Annual Budget** \$79,000.34

.110 County Forest Administrator (25%)	16,034.05
.112 Assistant Forest Administrator (4%)	2,055.47
.136 Forest Technician (40%)	19,316.50
.122 Administrative Secretary A (10%)	1,503.52
.131 Extra Help	812.00
.164 Allocated Wages	(14,716.00)
.750 WRS, FICA, INS, etc.	16,982.74
.137 Conservation Congress Annual Meeting	1,086.54
.247 Game Trail Maintenance	1,549.55
.302 Equipment & Vehicle Fuel	2,482.70
.310 Supplies	473.40
.588 Beaver Control	400.00
.599 State Aid Forest Road (56106)	<u>21,293.88</u>

**Total Conservation Fund & State Aid Forest Rds. Expenses** **\$**  
2018 Forestry/Conservation - Budget (\$361,301.34) vs. Expenditures (\$344,436.20)

**Wildlife Habitat Fund - Revenues:**

Wildlife Habitat Grant (5¢/Acre – 43583)	\$1,928.31
<b>Total Wildlife Habitat Fund Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,928.31</b>
<b>Wildlife Habitat Fund Expenses:</b>	<b>-0-</b>

**State Forest Aid Fund Revenues:**

Forest Administration Grant	\$58,865.12
<b>Total State Forest Aid Fund Revenues</b>	<b>\$58,865.12</b>

**State Forest Aid Fund Expenses (56102)**

.164 Allocated Wages (Forest Administration Grant)	\$58,865.12
<b>Total State Forest Aid Fund Expenses</b>	<b>\$58,865.12</b>

The Townships containing County Forest Land benefit monetarily from scientific forest management. These Towns receive 10% of stumpage revenues from annual timber sales, a total of \$59,382.80 in 2018. These monies were disbursed in January 2019 per the percentage of the County Forest contained in the Town.  
Payments to Towns for 2018:

Cloverland – \$11,407.91	Conover - \$35,230.87
Land O'Lakes - \$3,158.75	Lincoln - \$1,370.79
Plum Lake - \$8,164.36	Washington - \$24.29
Phelps - \$25.83	

Townships also receive from the State of Wisconsin 30 cents/acre annually for lands entered into the County Forest Law that lie within the Township.

## **PARKS & RECREATION**

Routine maintenance was performed on the County's 15 picnic areas, 3 swimming beaches, 1 shooting range, 11 boat landings, 13 improved fishing sites, and 4 campgrounds. There are barrier-free pan fishing piers at Deep Lake, Cook's Lake, Dr. Oldfield Memorial Park (Wisconsin River), Upper Buckatabon Lake, and Muskellunge Lake. The high-use major park facilities were cleaned twice each week, with lower use facilities cleaned once per week.

The continued maintenance and repairs of these facilities was made possible in 2018 by the Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee's continued support. Bruce McConnell was again hired as a summer Limited Term Employee to assist Parks and Recreation Technician Don Merten with park maintenance and repairs.



*New restroom facility at Eagle Lake County Park*

Vilas County Parks & Recreation has donation tubes at the shooting range, two campgrounds, two canoe campsites and four boat landings. An additional donation tube was installed at the Pioneer Creek ski trail before the winter season. Donations and fees collected at these facilities in 2018 are as follows:

### **PARKS DONATIONS**

Vilas County Shooting Range	1,427.58
Tamarack Springs Campground	990.00
Equestrian Campground	245.00
Rummels Canoe Campsite	20.00
Buckatabon Campsite	15.00
Eagle Lake Boat Landing	120.25
Buckatabon Boat Landing	58.26
Muskellunge Lake Landing	22.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,898.09</b>

### **PARKS & RECREATION PROGRAM REVENUES**

#### **State Grants:**

Snowmobile Trail Maintenance (210.46.43571)	433,515.00
Snowmobile Trail Development (210.46.43572)	556,983.53
ATV/UTV Trail Maintenance (215.57.43571)	27,831.97
ATV/UTV Trail Development (215.57.43572)	480,160.89
Recreational Boating Facilities/Muskies Inc.	18,635.00
Recreational Trails Program	187,041.40
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,704,167.79</b>



## **PARKS & RECREATION PROGRAM EXPENDITURES**

### Parks (100.30.55200)

.0110 Department Head Salary	\$35,840.00
.0122 Administrative Secretary A	18,022.00
.0135 Seasonal Parks Worker	19,412.00
.0136 Parks Technician	25,043.00
.0750 WRS, FICA, INS, etc.	5,366.00
.0221 Telephone	1,650.00
.0239 Refuse Removal	950.00
.0242 Maintenance & Supplies	10,365.00
.0243 Boat Landings	6,000.00
.0248 Pan Fishing Piers	1,150.00
.0302 Equipment & Vehicle Fuel	15,500.00
.0311 Postage	300.00
.0346 Recreational Trail Safety	1,000.00
.0820 Capital Improvements	<u>15,000.00</u>

**Total Parks:** **\$155,598.00**

## **SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM**

### **Snowmobile (210.46.55441):**

.0110 Department Head Salary	\$22,798.44
.0750 WRS, FICA, INS, etc.	2,385.11
.0221 Telephone	542.08
.0302 Equipment & Fuel	1,148.67
.0310 Supplies	305.92
.0311 Postage	0.00
.0330 Travel & Meetings	0.00
.0346 Snowmobile Safety Committee	1,500.00
.0405 Trail Maintenance	144,855.00
.0406 Supplemental Maintenance	288,660.00
.0810 Capital Equipment	4,500.00
.0820 Trail Development	<u>336,766.34</u>

**Total Snowmobile Trail Program:** **\$803,461.56**

## **ATV PROGRAM**

### ATV/UTV Trails (215.57.56109)

.0302 Equipment & Vehicle Fuel	1,457.66
.0330 Travel & Meetings	0.00
.0346 Recreational Safety Committee	500.00
.0405 Trail Maintenance	5,881.15
.0810 Capital Equipment	27,831.97
.0820 Trail Development	<u>123,784.68</u>

**Total ATV/UTV Trail Program:** **\$151,616.65**

## **TORCH LAKE CAMPGROUND**

TLC Revenue (280.80.46720) **\$29,611.47**

TLC Expenditures(280.80.58000)

.0221 Telephone	913.61
.0239 Maintenance	6,983.02
.0431 Processing Fees	1,250.02
.0590 Bank Fees	180.90
.0918 Refunds	605.00

**TOTAL TLC EXPENDATURES 9,832.55**

## **SNOWMOBILE TRAIL PROGRAM**

The fiscal year for the program was 1 July 2017 through 30 June 2018. Vilas County contracted the maintenance for 481.1 miles of State funded snowmobile trails, which provide north-south and east-west corridors connecting population centers and related services throughout the County. Funding for maintenance and development of trails is available from snowmobile registration fees, motor fuel taxes, and trail use permits. The Department of Natural Resources administers the program statewide, and mandates that participating counties are responsible for the maintenance and safety of the state funded snowmobile trails within their respective counties. This is facilitated by annual contracts between Vilas County and the Department of Natural Resources. Vilas County subsequently contracts those same miles with the eleven snowmobile clubs that are the framework of the Vilas County Snowmobile Alliance, which agree to maintain safe and usable trails. Vilas County inspects the State funded snowmobile trail system at least twice during the snowmobile season to verify contract compliance with grooming, signing, and reasonable attempts to ensure public safety.

The State annual snowmobile trail maintenance contract guarantees Vilas County up to \$300.00/mile for the maintenance associated with the State funded snowmobile trails including grooming, signing and brushing. Club maintenance expenses beyond the \$300/mile and up to \$900/mile are eligible for reimbursement through the Supplemental Program funded by out of State trail passes and a gas tax multiplier. The Department documents club expenditures and forwards those records to the DNR for audit and payment claims.

Vilas County was one of the few counties that experienced a winter of plentiful snowfall from late December through mid-March. This resulted in total snowmobile trail maintenance costs for the 11 snowmobile clubs in 2017-2018 reaching \$569,729.62, or \$1,184.22/mile. Due to the lack of significant snowfall throughout the state and very few counties being eligible for supplemental payments, there were sufficient funds available to reimburse eligible counties the full request of expenditures up to the maximum of \$900/mile. Vilas County received 100% of the maximum allowable supplemental reimbursement and a disbursement of funds paid to the 11 Vilas County snowmobile clubs was as follows:

Club	Funded Miles	Costs Submitted	Cost Per Mile	Total Payments
Arbor Vitae	54.9	\$68,952.70	\$1,255.97	\$50,096.44
Boulder Junction	68.4	\$79,065.72	\$1,155.93	\$62,415.24
Conover	39.0	\$36,641.30	\$939.52	\$35,587.64
Eagle River	60.4	\$68,172.52	\$1,128.68	\$55,115.21
Lac du Flambeau	19.6	\$14,604.75	\$745.14	\$14,604.75
Land O'Lakes	32.4	\$54,338.20	\$1,677.10	\$29,565.12
Manitowish Waters	22.2	\$22,212.40	\$1,000.56	\$20,257.58
Phelps	32.0	\$26,464.98	\$827.03	\$26,464.98
Presque Isle-Winchester	39.7	\$53,841.20	\$1,356.20	\$36,226.39
Sayner	74.5	\$82,010.85	\$1,100.82	\$67,981.51
St. Germain	38.0	\$63,425.00	\$1,669.08	\$34,675.14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>481.1</b>	<b>\$569,729.62</b>	<b>\$1,184.22</b>	<b>\$432,990.00</b>

The balance of expenditures not reimbursed by the State and costs associated with maintaining non-funded trails comes from donations from area businesses and fund raising efforts by each club. The addition of the Wisconsin resident trail pass generated enough revenue to increase the labor and equipment rates for the snowmobile clubs by approximately 20% across the board.

The Vilas County Snowmobile Trail Program remains an essential part of Vilas County's economy, and is vital to the winter recreation and tourism industry in this area. Concerns regarding the pending loss of land use agreements with private landowners continue to result in trail relocations. The Department is working with area clubs, state, and federal government in an attempt to resolve these issues. When relocations become a necessity, the trend is to focus on public land use. This, combined with ever-growing demands for additional recreational trails within Vilas County, supports the importance of pursuing multi-use recreational trails in the future.

Vilas County currently has 43 recreational bridges on the State funded snowmobile trails. The bridges are constructed and maintained through snowmobile and/or ATV user fees. These bridges are owned, inspected, and insured by Vilas County. GPS units are currently installed in all 22 snowmobile trail grooming units in the County. The Snowmobile Alliance continues to be a valued partner with the County and remains at the forefront for establishing methods to bring safety, credibility and ground breaking data entry to the State program. Vilas County replaced two major recreational bridges and installed one new on in 2018.





*New \$138,000 ,snowmobile bridge project crossing Buckatabon Creek in Conover*



*New \$117,000 ,snowmobile bridge project crossing Plum Creek in Sayner*





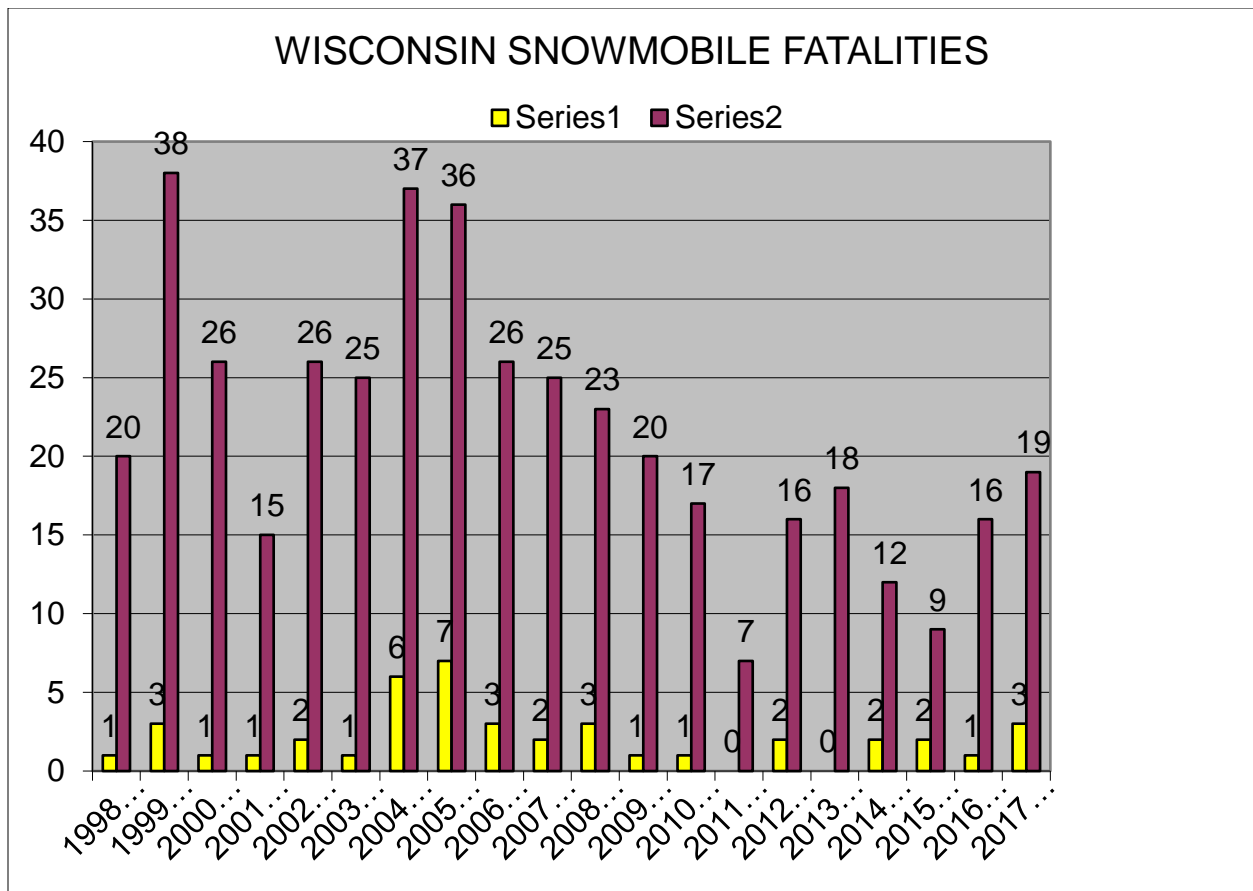
*New \$178,000 boardwalk project crossing wetlands on shared-use trail north of Eagle River. Joint funding from snowmobile and ATV grants*

### **RECREATIONAL TRAILS SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The Vilas County Snowmobile Trail Safety Committee was established in 2009 to assume proactive efforts regarding snowmobile accident reduction. Vilas County achieved zero fatalities in two of the last seven years. The positive results from the efforts of this committee resulted in the County expanding this group into the Recreational Trails Safety Committee to include other recreational user groups.

The Recreational Trails Safety Committee member in 2018 were: County Board Supervisors Dan Swiechowski (Chair), Holly Tomlanovich (Vice Chair), & Ron DeBruyne Parks & Recreation Administrator Dale Mayo; law enforcement representatives Vilas County Sheriff's Deputy Will Krueger and DNR Warden Tim Price; Public Health Director Gina Egan; Tourism & Publicity Director Cindy Burzinski; Vilas County Snowmobile Alliance representatives Steve Wolfe & Jen Beda; ATV/UTV/OHM Trail representatives Roger Flaherty & Mike Musiedlak; and Bicycle Trail representatives Jeff Currie & Barb Freudigmann.

The Recreational Trails Safety Committee had a 2018 budget of \$1,500.00 for snowmobile related safety messages and education. They pooled resources with the Oneida County Snowmobile Council and Vilas County Snowmobile Alliance. The Committee utilized these funds to display snowmobile trail safety spots on WJFW Channel 12 in Rhinelander, PSAs on local radio stations, and safety posters to draw attention to the Trail Intersection Numbering System (TINS) and riding sober. The assistance received from Vilas County Public Health and Tourism continues to be invaluable in the ongoing efforts to promote safe responsible recreational opportunities.



*A recreational safety message on a billboard on STH 45 south of Eagle River*





*This mobile billboard was placed along the main snowmobile corridors in Eagle River, St. Germain and Arbor Vitae targeting a specific audience.*

The Committee worked with the Vilas County Sheriff Department to collect data and continued to further reduce recreational trails accidents and portray a family friendly recreational destination. The Recreational Trail Safety Committee continues to support the Vilas County Snowmobile & ATV/UTV Alliances and other recreational trail groups in their efforts to promote safe and responsible recreation, safer trails and positive public relations regarding all Vilas County recreational trails.

### **ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV/UTVs)**

There continues to be growing interest and support for All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) routes and trails in Vilas County from its communities. Under the direction of the Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee, the Department continues to work with local communities, the Highway Department and recreational trail groups to determine the feasibility of future ATV/UTV routes and trails in the County. The County approved and opened additional trails and routes in 2018. Vilas County now has a preferred ATV/UTV system of over 120 miles connecting Forest and Oneida Counties, the towns of Phelps, Lincoln, Washington, Cloverland, Conover, Land O'Lakes, St. Germain and the City of Eagle River. Three local ATV clubs maintain this system. Landover ATV Club purchased a drag and a tractor for maintenance in 2018.





*Landover ATV Club groomed ATV/UTV trails*

### **BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL PROGRAM**

The Department continues to work with surrounding communities to develop the County-owned abandoned railroad grade between the Towns of Conover and Phelps into a multi-use trail. Phase 3 is in the planning stage that will connect the eastern end of the trail at Song Hill Lane into the Phelps downtown area. The County elects not to sponsor any of these bicycle trails thus leaving the future maintenance as the responsibility of the towns that chose to sponsor trails within their boundaries.

### **OTHER TRAILS**

We now have approximately 17.5 miles of dedicated equestrian trails in eastern Vilas County bringing more recreational users to the County and surrounding communities.

The Department worked with an off-highway motorcycle (OHM) group to develop an 8.5-mile trail system in the Tamarack Springs area. Four miles were completed in 2018 with the remaining 4.5 miles scheduled for completion in 2019.

There have been some requests to provide a winter fat-tire bike trail system. The Department is working with a local group to look into the logistics of allowing a groomed winter fat-tire bike trail on the newly developing off-highway motorcycle (OHM) trail at Tamarack Springs. This area of the forest is currently under-utilized for recreation. This proposed trail use would not conflict with other winter activities and user groups.





*Shared-use is mandatory to accommodate the many user-groups with limited public land.*

### **TORCH LAKE CAMPGROUND AND RV PARK**

This facility is now fully operational and has 20 camping sites with water and electric hookup, plus a host site with full hookup. The facility also has a dump station, Wi-Fi and potable water. In 2018 the shower building and asphalt were a welcomed addition to our facility.

Total revenue for this facility in 2018 was \$29,611.47 less operational expenses of \$9,832.55 leaving a net revenue of 19,778.92. Campers were very happy with the facility and amenities and stated they would return. The 2019 season looks to be promising with 72 reservations as of 26 February 2019 for 334 days and \$11,690.00.

Phase 3 will involve an additional 20 sites. This will take place when the expected revenues can justify the expense. There are currently grants available to assist with the construction.





*New asphalt at Torch Lake Campground*



*Site 2 at Torch Lake Campground*





*The new shower building installed in 2018*

### **CROSS COUNTRY SKI TRAILS**

The Department maintains the cross-country ski trail on the Pioneer Creek trail system that has expanded to eleven miles of groomed and signed trails. A 2018 Polaris Ranger with tracks was purchased to maintain the ski trail at Pioneer Creek. We continue to work with the Town of Conover to provide this system. The Town provides the heated bathroom facilities and plowed parking area at the trailhead, and provided funds to assist with the purchase of the trail groomer which Parks/Recreation Technician Don Merten uses to groom the ski trail system. A donation tube yielded \$149.00 during the 2018 season. A trail counter was placed at Pioneer Creek for one month having a total of 416 hits. The positive feedback from skiers indicates this trail system could be a popular destination in Vilas County.

The Langley Lake cross-country ski trail system is no longer groomed, and is available for those cross-country ski and snowshoe enthusiasts who prefer an ungroomed trail experience.





*Freshly groomed ski trail at Pioneer Creek*



*2018 Polaris Ranger with tracks and Tidd Tech groomer at Pioneer Creek*

## **EAGLE LAKE BOAT LANDING**

Parks & Recreation completed a rehabilitation of the Eagle Lake Boat Landing by paving the facility. This landing is on the Eagle River chain-of-lakes and is a popular launch area. Vilas County Parks & Recreation and the Headwaters Chapter of Muskies Inc. committed to \$6,000 each toward this project. Parks &



Recreation applied for a matching \$12,000 Recreational Boating Facilities grant to allow the \$24,000 project come to fruition.



*Prepping for asphalt at Eagle Lake landing*

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **Vilas County Forestry Law Enforcement Report For 2018**

The Vilas County Sheriff's Office currently has one Deputy Sheriff assigned to recreational patrol duties within Vilas County's 1,018 square miles. Within our jurisdiction, 161 square miles of area creates our 1,318 lakes and 857 square miles is predominately heavily forested land. Approximately a quarter million acres of land is in public ownership in Vilas County.

Vilas County has just over 700 miles of groomed snowmobile trails. During the 2018 snowmobile season (end of December 2017 through March 2018) the Vilas County Sheriff's Office logged 666 hours of patrol, accident investigation, and record keeping associated with the snowmobile season. The Department had 34 snowmobile-related complaints, 42 reported snowmobile accidents, and 3 fatal snowmobile accidents. There were 39 citations and 15 written warnings issued by the Department.

The Vilas County ATV/UTV fiscal year for patrol runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>. From May 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the Vilas County Sheriff's Office had 234 hours of patrol, accident investigation, and record keeping associated with the ATV/UTV season. The Sheriff's Office had 42 ATV/UTV-related complaints on file, and 3 reported accidents. There were 20 citations and 5 written warnings issued in relation to illegal ATV/UTV operation.

During the open water months of 2018, the Vilas County Sheriff's Office logged 350 hours associated with marine patrol duties on the waters of Vilas County. The Vilas County Sheriff's Office had 3 reported

boating-related accidents and investigated 1 boating-related fatal incident. According to Sheriff's Department records, a total of 7 boating related complaints were received, and there were 28 citations and 42 written warnings issued with respect to illegal watercraft operation.

Sheriff's Department records reveal that there were 12 complaints filed and investigated by the Vilas County Sheriff's Office associated with the Vilas County Forest. These complaints consisted of: campgrounds complaints, complaints from a property owner in Presque Isle, and illegal ATV and snowmobile operation on County property. There was 1 citation issued for littering on County property.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL**

Wisconsin based Discover Media Works filmed an episode of 'Into the Outdoors' featuring forest management on the Vilas County Forest. 'Into the Outdoors' is an Emmy Award-winning TV show with a fun, educational and engaging online presence. The science education network aims at empowering today's classrooms to think critically about Planet Earth. The episode 'Protecting Forests, Enhancing Lives' which air in October 2018 targets youth with fun and educational programing with an estimated audience of 400,000. The segment of Into the Outdoors – 'Protecting Forests, Enhancing Lives' featuring Vilas County Forest was a cooperative effort of the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association, Wisconsin County Forest Association and Vilas County Forestry Recreation, and Land Department. The episode 'Protecting Forests, Enhancing Lives answers the question 'What is sustainable forestry and how are our lives enriched from proper forest management?'" The half-hour episode follows trees from the forest to finished products. Discover Wisconsin Into the Outdoors Protecting Forests, Enhancing Lives can be viewed on the Discover Media Works website using the following link.

[http://intotheoutdoors.org/watch/?zype\\_wp=true&zype\\_type=video\\_single&zype\\_video\\_id=5c06abc370e61c19bfee9fd0](http://intotheoutdoors.org/watch/?zype_wp=true&zype_type=video_single&zype_video_id=5c06abc370e61c19bfee9fd0)

The Department staff, under the direction of the Committee, continued Vilas County's involvement with the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA), Society of American Foresters (SAF), Trees for Tomorrow, Wisconsin DNR, Wisconsin Headwaters Invasives Partnership (WHIP), and other County Departments to support sustainable forest management and the wise use of our natural resources.

The Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee introduced 22 resolutions to the County Board, 18 were subsequently passed. Notable subjects were: Authorize 2018 Real Estate Sales; Two amendments to Chapter 16 Forest and Land Ordinance; County Conservation Aids, Utility Easements across County Forest Lands; Annual Forest Administration Grant & Work Plan.

Vilas County annually receives 866 work hours per year of Wisconsin-DNR assistance. The hours are negotiated every four years and are set by administrative rule. The County receives technical and scientific advice and assistance on timber sale establishment, timber sale administration, reconnaissance, and regeneration along with other assistance including insect and disease management, wildlife management, and infrastructure. The Wisconsin DNR Forestry staff were able to meet and exceed the standard for fiscal year 2017-2018, with a total of 933.75 hours (67.75 additional hours or 107.8%). Time Standards were recalculated for WDNR Fiscal Years 2019-2022, resulting in Vilas County Forest receiving an increase in WDNR assistance in work hours from 866 to 910 hours per year for fiscal 2019. The time standard for Vilas County Forest for the remainder of FY19-22 will be recalculated in 2019 and may change slightly. Sincere appreciation goes to the staff of the Eagle River Ranger Station, Vilas County Liaison Forester Jill Nemec, Ranger Jamie Remme, and Forestry Technician Ryan Brown.

Assistance is given to other County Departments throughout the year. The Department Foresters remain involved with the Land and Water Conservation Department in working on the problem of invasive plants. The Foresters continued participation on the Steering Committee of the Wisconsin Headwaters Invasives

Partnership (WHIP). WHIP continues its relationship with Lumberjack Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., receiving continued sponsorship and financial assistance.

The Sky Barons Radio-Controlled Aircraft Flying Club continues to maintain for the public the flying field and shelter in Conover.

**ANNUAL TIMBER SALE REVENUES OF CO. FOREST LANDS & RESERVE LANDS**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TIMBER SALE REV.</u>
1999	\$559,532.13
2000	\$553,332.26
2001	\$304,513.71
2002	\$368,664.02
2003	\$255,685.30
2004	\$319,720.84
2005	\$380,035.30
2006	\$605,860.44
2007	\$463,092.90
2008	\$602,801.58
2009	\$297,910.49
2010	\$315,763.15
2011	\$346,309.39
2012	\$396,915.35
2013	\$543,285.43
2014	\$336,690.33
2015	\$655,269.47
2016	\$602,436.51
2017	\$417,085.64
2018	\$593,827.98

Presented to the Vilas County Board of Supervisors by:

**VILAS COUNTY FORESTRY, RECREATION, & LAND COMMITTEE**

Steve Doyen, Chair  
Holly Tomlanovich, Vice Chair  
Art Kunde  
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